



The Cherry Tree



Volume 3, Issue 4

March 2005

Command Ombudsman Newsletter

USS George Washington (CVN 73)

CMC's Take

CMDCM(AW/SW/SCW) Scott Benning
Command Master Chief, USS George Washington (CVN 73)

Hello GW Families and welcome to our quarterly Ombudsman Newsletter. Our Ombudsman and Public Affairs team have once again put together a great newsletter that I hope you will find informative and helpful.

The crew on board has accomplished so many great things since our last newsletter that it would almost be impossible to cover them all. Of course, I love talking about our crew, so I will have to mention a couple of our most significant accomplishments.

Our most important event was getting the ship safely into the drydock for the start of our yearlong maintenance period. Northrop Grumman Newport News has become a new part of our team to conduct a large portion of the maintenance. They have ensured a smooth transition for our crew. The teamwork with NGNN and all of the contractors on board has been outstanding. Many of our Sailors are assigned to special teams such as paint, deck, lagging, vent cleaning and many others to complete work that is required of our ships work force. All are doing a phenomenal job staying on or ahead of schedule.

Another important event is our Community Relations project, which is being managed by our Command Religious Ministries Department. Chaplain Williams and his team continue to do great work in all areas for our Sailors, but this project is huge and involves the entire crew. We arrived in Newport News and on our first day provided more than 5,000 hours of community service throughout the city of Newport News. You may have seen the story covered on the local TV stations. Our goal during our time in Newport News is to provide a minimum of 20,000 hours of service to the community in which we now work and live. Our Sailors have really enjoyed this venture and continue to seek ways to get involved. This is something that has never been accomplished before in Newport News and once again, the GW crew is setting the tone for those that will follow. The slogan for this project has become "We made a difference in Iraq as we were present for the transfer of power to its own government, and now we want to make a difference in the city of Newport News." We have a spectacular crew and everyday they amaze us with their desire to give.

Speaking of giving, we currently have our Navy Relief Fund Drive on going. Lt. Gay and DMC Ashe are our command coordinators and are working hard to ensure we meet our goal. This is a great opportunity

to give to each other as the Navy Relief supports all Sailors during a time of need. If every Sailor were to provide \$5 a month for the next year, we would meet our goal. More than \$86,000 in assistance was provided to GW Sailors and families last year. So please, ask your Sailor if they have completed their allotment form to contribute. It feels so much better to give than it does to receive. Experience the feeling of helping others, and I assure you we will meet our community service and Navy Relief Fund Drive goals.

As you can see, our family support groups are also trying to gain momentum in participation. We have two groups, an Officer and an Enlisted support group. Please call our GW Care Line at (757) 444-0460 and listen to the individual mailboxes for more information on upcoming events. This is a great way for our GW families to get to know each other as well as learning about the great resources available to our families.

That is all for this edition. I could type for hours about our great Sailors. Thank you for the great support you are providing your Sailors. It is the support and love from home that keep them motivated and successful. Combat readiness begins at home, just as our Sailors are our most important assets; our families are also our most important assets.

Respectfully,
Your CMC



GW Photo lab

Thoughts from Your Ombudsman for March 2005!!!



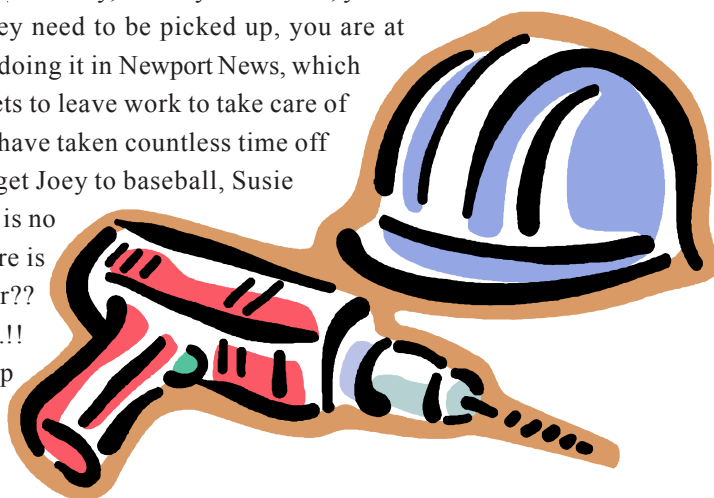
When I started this entry for the quarterly newsletter, I had no intention to write it as an editorial. However, due to recent events and the lack of clever and witty material, I have decided to do just that. Here we are in the “shipyard period.”

The Captain has deemed this new challenge a chance to grow and excel. Just like every other challenge that we as family and friends of *GW* Sailors have sought to conquer. We have survived and thrived very well. But the new position of having our Sailors home but still gone is sometimes more difficult than having them gone all together. Here are a few thoughts on what some of you may have encountered already, and if you haven't, yet hold on...the

slow train is coming! School calls, your children are sick, they need to be picked up, you are at work, your spouse is not only serving his/her country, they are doing it in Newport News, which for some of us feels like the other side of the planet. So, who gets to leave work to take care of the kids again? Another scenario- It is Thursday afternoon, you have taken countless time off this week to take care of the sick little ones. Now you have to get Joey to baseball, Susie to dance class on the other side of town at the same time. There is no milk, no bread and no diapers, the baby is screaming, and where is your significant other after being gone for 347 days last year?? Sleeping on the couch because he/she left for work at 4 a.m.!! Here we are again going it alone, holding down the entire camp but this time, our Sailors are actually sleeping in it.

But you are not ALONE. There are many others in the same boat (no pun intended). Get involved, call your Ombudsman for information and go to a Family Support Group meeting. So, now the bigger question, how do you survive this one?? Same as the cruise— secure your feet in some cement, try to remember when and why you fell in love with them in the first place and remember that this too shall pass. Keep talking— communication is the key to all great and long-lasting relationships.

Here are some links to things to do in Newport News, and links to the nearest ITT offices, among others. Visit your local FFSG for volunteer activities and ways to make new friends and rise to this new challenge.



A message from bsstcb@yahoo.com: (Shelby is the EFSC President) *GW* Families

We have come up with a new way of communicating. We have started a group on yahoo. It has a calendar, a message center so that I can send out messages and a place for files. There is already some great news about the scholarship fund on the site.



All you have to do is go to the link, click yes and then you can change the way you receive the information.

Groups.yahoo.com/groups/gwefsg

Hope this helps. This is going to be conclusive with the careline. There will be more information on this site than the careline.

Shelby
FSG President

Bobby Nelson is the OSG President. She can be reached at 489-0896 OR gwospouses@cox.net



Things to do in
Newport News:

CALL: 888-493-7986

**OR GO TO THIS
WEB SITE:**

www.newport-news.org/

(Please see Page 5 for additional links and information.)

GW Kicks Off Yearlong Volunteer Program

By JO1 Rebecca A. Perron

More than 1100 *USS George Washington* crewmembers set their sights on two dozen community relations projects around Newport News, Va., on Jan. 27, spending their time cleaning, painting and renovating, while the ship was scheduled to be towed from the Norfolk Naval Base to the Northrop Grumman Newport News shipyard for a Docked Planned Maintenance Availability.

GW's crew spent the day working for seven different agencies at 24 locations around Newport News, pitching in to clean up trash and debris at parks, distributing food for a food bank and painting and cleaning at homeless shelters.

"Even overseas the projects weren't this big," said Chap. Paul Witt, *GW*'s community relations project coordinator. "It's a little cold out there today, but the work will help us warm right up."

GW's crew has set a goal to volunteer at least 20,000 hours in three phases to agencies throughout Newport News during the ship's time in the yards. The first phase was the kick-off day, which had an expectation of completing 4000 of those hours by 800 crewmembers. *GW* exceeded its goal by volunteering 5500 hours with 1100 *GW* crewmembers.

"We are here, we are going to make a difference here," said CMDCM(AW/SW/SCW) Scott Benning, *GW*'s command master chief. "Our crew is phenomenal. Any time there is a chance for them to help, they always exceed expectations."

During the second phase, the crew will participate in various projects volunteering about 1000 hours each month of the availability. The third phase will be a final day of many projects and large crew participation mirroring the kick off.

During the first phase, crewmembers signed up for a project as individuals or as a division. FC3 Nicole Scull of Combat Systems Department's CS-7 Division volunteered with her division, and said it was an easy choice to volunteer at Deer Park.

"I live near here, and now I know this is a place I can bring my son," Scull said. "Since we have picked up the trash and fallen branches, I know it's safe to let him play."

Sixty-four members of CS-7 cleaned at Deer Park, and they have decided to adopt the park as a division. The mayor of Newport News, Joe Franks, stopped by the park to thank them for their effort.

"In the whole history of Newport News and the shipyard, never has a ship's crew done what you are doing this morning," Franks said. "I am proud to have the men and women of *USS George Washington* helping us, and I thank you."

The mayor also visited and spoke with crewmembers at the food bank and one of the homeless shelters.

At the food bank, 25 members of Legal, Dental and AIMD divided into five groups to get the work done. One group made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and packed after-school snacks for 300 children who are part of an after-school feeding program for the underprivileged. Another group delivered food to various neighborhood distribution centers.

DT3(SW/AW) Willie Thurmond of Dental was part of a group working in the warehouse to pre-stage food for deliveries.

"This is a good thing we are doing to give back to the community," Thurmond said. "Kids are our next generation, and I feel proud to help them."



V-0's ABE1(AW) James Newsome, AN Paul Post and ABH3 Joseph Dennison clean an oven during Thursday's COMREL project at Friends of the Homeless.

PH2(AW/SW) Leah Stiles

See *COMREL* on page 4

Like many of *GW*'s crewmembers, Thurmond plans to donate many hours of service to the city, but at a different location each time so he can meet different people and help out in different ways.

ABE1(AW) James Newsome of Air Department's V-0 Division also plans to continue volunteering throughout the year. But he plans to keep going to the same place. He spent his day cleaning a homeless shelter.

"They seem to need a lot of help here," Newsome said. "I even plan to bring my seven-year-old daughter so she can get involved and become more aware of the need to give back to the community."

Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Delano, division officer for Air Department's V-3 Division, did bring his daughter and wife to the homeless shelter where his division spent the

day painting. ABH3(AW) Nick Cuervo of V-3 was excited about this opportunity.

"Being in the Navy is all about service to one's nation, and volunteering is all about service to one's community," Cuervo explained. "These projects are a good



PH2(AW/SW) Leah Stiles



way to show what the Navy is all about. It's not just about going to sea, it's about dedicating ourselves to service."

These projects are a good way to show what the Navy is all about. It's not just about going to sea, it's about dedicating ourselves to service.

GW's commanding officer, Capt. Garry White, visited the homeless shelter where V-3 volunteered.

"Once again, George Washington is setting the standard here," White said. "Hopefully, this will become a tradition for ships in the shipyard at Newport News, and others will see if they can exceed our goals."



Department of the Navy
USS George Washington (CVN 73)
Command Family Ombudsman
FPO-AE 09550-2873
Official Business

USS George Washington (CVN-73)

www.spear.navy.mil/gw/

We-Care Line 444-0460

Out of the area 1-800-372-5463

Command Family Ombudsman

gwombud@aol.com

Lisa D. 544-0397

Lisa C. 613-7527

Tamara 544-0395

Elizabeth Anne 544-0403

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Tidewater Chapter 446-7700

Armed Forces Emergency Service Center

(Toll Free 24 / 7) (877) 272-7337



www.ffscnorva.navy.mil

LITTLE CREEK	757-462-7563
Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	
NEWPORT NEWS	757-688-NAVY
Mon-Thus 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. & Fri 7:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.	
NORFOLK	757-444-2102
Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	
PORTSMOUTH	757-396-1255
Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	
NORTHWEST	757-421-8770
Mon-Wed 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Thur 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., Fri 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	
OCEANA	757-433-2912
Mon-Thur 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. & Fri 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	
YORKTOWN	757-887-4606
Mon-Thurs 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. & Fri 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	

Closest ITT Ticket offices to Newport News ship building are the following:

<http://mwr.navy.mil/mwrprgms/itt.html>

WPNSTA Yorktown

PO Box 32

Lackey, VA 23694-0000

DSN: 953-4609

Commercial: 757-887-4609

Fax: 953-4340

NSC Williamsburg

Cheatham Annex

108 Sandra Ave

Williamsburg, VA 23185-0000

DSN: 953-7418

Commercial: 757-887-7418

Fax: 757-887-7643

